FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Our Parks, Their Homes

330 enthusiastic donors at the annual Spring Dinner and Auction raised more than $250,000 for Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks on April 23rd. Proceeds fund projects that could not happen without philanthropic support. $62,000 donated to the Fund-A-Need appeal specifically benefits science and research projects.

Seattle, WA – As the National Park Service continues to celebrate its centennial in 2016, parks lovers came out in force to the Renton Pavilion Event Center to support Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks on Saturday, April 23rd. Washington’s National Park Fund’s signature spring event drew a record-setting crowd of more than 330 guests who proceeded to bid with enthusiasm, collectively donating more than $250,000 for the parks.

Honorary Auction Chair Jim Whittaker engaged the audience of park rangers, staff, superintendents, and people who are passionate about the parks with his lively recollections including observations about the importance of our national parks and his legendary mountaineering career. As the first American to summit Mount Everest on May 1, 1963, he shared anecdotes with the audience throughout the evening.

Keynote speaker Jon Jarvis, Director of the National Park Service, delivered a stirring message, talking frankly about the issues facing the national park system as well as the core American values behind them.

“One of our primary focus areas within this year’s Centennial celebration is ensuring that the next generation of American citizens cares about our national parks and that they visit them and support them. We need them to protect and preserve them into the next century,” Jarvis stated.

This year’s Fund-A-Need appeal, “Our Parks, Their Home,” was a focus during the evening. Science and research projects such as glacial monitoring and native plant restoration are woefully underfunded and yet vitally important. The parks are home to countless wildlife, plants, lakes and streams all of which are being impacted by changing
climates and environmental issues. When asked to help sustain important science and research at the parks with a special Fund-A-Need contribution, guests responded by donating more than $62,000.

Auction items for the event were procured with outdoor enthusiasts in mind, and the unique offerings ranging from historic park maps, tents, outdoor apparel to a signed limited edition print of Jim Whittaker on the summit of Mt. Everest, and a signed one-of-a kind photograph of Mount Rainier National Park’s Centennial US Postage Stamp by Matt Dieterich provided guests the opportunity to leave that night with unique and useful items.

“Each year this wonderful evening brings in more people and raises more money. The atmosphere is always warm and inviting as park scientists and rangers mingle with those who attend. With people coming from throughout Puget Sound and across the great state of Washington to celebrate these iconic public lands, it makes for quite the night,” Laurie Ward, Executive Director of Washington's National Park Fund stated.

Annually, superintendents of Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks submit lists of priority park projects. The auction helps raise needed money to help fund these projects that otherwise would not happen. Over the past seven years, more than $3 million has been contributed to the parks through Washington's National Park Fund. 100% of the donations given to Washington’s National Park Fund stay in Washington State for the benefit of Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks.

Washington’s National Park Fund is very grateful to these companies for their sponsorship of the Spring Dinner and Auction:

- Premier Sponsors – BES Events and Freeman Productions
- Signature Sponsor – Guest Services, Inc.
- Major Sponsors – Aramark and Ben Bridge Jewelers

Next year’s Spring Dinner and Auction has been scheduled for Saturday, April 22nd, 2017.

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www.wnpf.org  Washington’s National Park Fund is the only philanthropic organization dedicated exclusively to supporting Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks through charitable contributions, operating under a Partnership Agreement between each national park and the Fund. Our mission is to raise private support to deepen the public’s love for, understanding of, and experiences in Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Park. www.wnpf.org